



Wisteria Park Homeowners Association, Inc.

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Dear Homeowner:

One of the items on the WPHOA Board's list of priority activities for 2017 is the rehabilitation of our storm water retention ponds. Not only do these six ponds serve a practical purpose and meet the requirements of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFMD) as set out in the *Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions for Wisteria Park*, they also enhance the beauty of the community.

Wisteria Park's ponds are now 12 years old and the time has come to begin protecting the land surrounding them. The Board has sought the advice of our new landscape company, West Bay Landscape Inc., as well as the current pond maintenance company and three other pond specialists. All agreed that the ponds are in good condition but could be improved to prevent problems like erosion and land loss. The onset of erosion in some areas has already been observed, with a resulting loss of some turf areas. This is illustrated in the following photo:



The good news is that the steps required to reverse this will also enhance the nature beauty of the ponds and increase their value to the community.

The first, easiest and least costly action to take is to establish a "no-mow" strip around every pond. The industry standard is to leave a two-to-five-foot strip around each pond. Once the strip is well established, it is top-trimmed to a height of about 12 to 18 inches. Allowing grasses to grow to this height will result in root development down to the water level. This will help hold the soil together and thus resist the erosive effect of wave action. It will also prevent grass clippings from entering the ponds. Grass clippings change the biology of the ponds and contribute to sedimentation. West Bay is now implementing the no-mow policy on common property adjacent to ponds and on east-side properties adjacent to ponds.

The following photo illustrates the appearance of these zones about two months following implementation of the no-mow practice.



Erosion is beginning to show up on some west-side properties. In keeping with the adage that “an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure”, we urge west-side homeowners with properties adjacent to ponds to talk with their landscapers about establishing “no-mow” zones next to their ponds. If you happen to be using West Bay for your landscaping you will find them very familiar with the practice. Some homes on the west side have quite steep slopes down to their ponds. In these situations, planting taller / deeper-rooted decorative grasses may be a worthwhile option to consider.

Your Board is investigating a second phase in preserving our ponds that will involve planting more aquatic plants on the “littoral shelves” that make up the first two to four feet of each of the ponds. More plantings will help break up water movement, attract more wildlife and enhance the natural appearance of the ponds.

An excellent article on ponds is at the University of Florida’s Institute for Food and Agricultural Science site: http://manatee.ifas.ufl.edu/lawn_and_garden/FFL/pdfs/Guide%20to%20Selection%20and%20Installation%20of%20Stormwater%20Pond%20Plants_ghansen_07262012.pdf. For non-landscape professional homeowners the most useful portions of the article are its illustrations and photos of best practice. The article also contains diagrams for plantings for various situations as well as a lengthy list of suitable aquatic plants. Attached to this letter are photos of some of the aquatic plants recommended for Wisteria Park.

The Board is now seeking a detailed proposal to begin a phased program of upgrading the plantings in the ponds, starting with areas showing early signs of erosions. Work should begin over the next few months. In the meantime, homeowners on both the east and west sides of Wisteria Park are asked to assist in the pond rehabilitation process by respecting the no-mow strips.

Sincerely,

Nicole Banks
Community Association Manager
On behalf of the Wisteria Park Homeowners Association Board of Directors

Proposed Aquatic Plants

Arrowhead/Duck Potato



Pickerselweed



Jointed Spikerush



Golden Canna



Fragrant water lily



Tropical water lily

